



# tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

VOLUME 3

1982

NUMBER 2

## N. E. A. GRANT UPDATE

The National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., has awarded I.F.A.F.A. a \$24,453.00 grant. The purpose of the grant is to produce a series of L.P. albums of Italian folk music and songs performed by first generation Italian immigrants living in the U.S.

Anna Chairetakis, the project director, reports that 90 per cent of the recording of the first three albums has been completed.

**Album One** will feature songs from the Alpine and other northern regions of Italy performed by the Coro Dolomiti of Brooklyn.

**Album Two** will feature a repertoire of medieval ballads and love and work songs sung by Antonio Davida. The album will also include Campanian "neighborly" songs accompanied by the oboe, tambourine and bagpipes.

**Album Three** will consist of a partial repertoire of 12 Sicilian singers and musicians performing in the older peasant tradition. Their repertoire includes peasant work songs, medieval ballads and a lullabye.

A **Fourth album** has been made possible thanks to contributions from the Western N.Y. Society for the Preservation of Italian Folklore. This album will feature a mixture of regional Italian folk music from Western N.Y. and Southern Ontario.

Anna will be suspending work on the project until March 1983 in order to attend to other professional commitments. She will complete the writing and editing, and has asked the N.E.A. for an extension on the project in accordance with the above time schedule.

## FOLK TOUR PLANNED

I.F.A.F.A. in cooperation with Alitalia and the Federazione Italiana Tradizioni Popolari (Rome) is organizing a folk tour of Southern Italy for Spring 1983. We will be visiting Campania, Abruzzi, Calabria and Sicily.

There will be dance classes and cultural talks with native instructors. We will sing and dance with local folk groups, have fresh wines, cheeses, fruits – wonderful scenery and friends.

Departure – N.Y. Thurs. Apr. 28. Return Thurs. May 12. (Those who wish can extend their stay.)

Cost of Tour is \$1195. Includes round trip airfare New York – Rome, bus touring and accommodations. Tour is limited to 30 people.

If interested write:

Elba Farabegoli Gurzau  
1325 West Roosevelt Blvd.  
Phila. Pa. 19140

## Dr. Leonard Covello

1887 – 1982

It is with a deep sense of loss that we record the death of Dr. Leonard Covello on August 19, 1982.

A man of great warmth, understanding and achievement, he brought his considerable talents to bear on the problems of youths; education, and social conditions.

In 1932, he founded and was first president of the Italian Choral Society which is still in existence today under the name of Coro d'Italia. We at IFAFA are beneficiaries of his positive leadership. In sadness, but with grateful memory, we acknowledge his outstanding contributions.

## CONFERENCE REVIEW

The fifth annual conference and workshop of the Italian Folk Art Federation of America chaired by Elba Farabegoli Gurzau and Loretta Marsela took place the weekend of October 22 – 24, 1982, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Conference brought together folk groups and other interested parties to share their knowledge of various aspects of Italian Folklore. Members came from Maryland, Washington, D.C., Florida, as well as from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. The mid-west was represented by groups from Ohio, Iowa and Nebraska.

On Friday evening, Columbia Alfonsi led an exercise in movement designed to highlight choreometrics as defined by Alan Lomax.

### SATURDAY:

Opening Remarks, Michael Blum, Director of N.S.C. Pa.

Italian Folk Songs, Celeste Di Pietropaolo, Washington D.C.

Gli Sbandieratori, (Il Patio) Mary Lou Casanta, Ohio.

St. Rocco Festival, reminiscent of Patrica near Rome, Prof. Emma Rocco, Pa.

Italian Festas and Festivals – How to make them more meaningful and culturally significant, Rachel Munafa, Esq., Pa..

### SATURDAY EVENING:

GALA DINNER followed by Festa Folcloristica Italiana, recalling the joyful vendemmia festivities in Italy.

PARADE OF COSTUMES AND GRAND MARCH. DANCE AND SONG PRESENTATIONS BY IFAFA GROUPS

### SUNDAY MORNING:

Christmas Carols of Italy with Ida Rosa Pugliese, Esq. and Lola Aquilino.

(Continued on Page 4)

## Dr. Leonard Covello

Dr. Leonard Covello died August 19, 1982 in Messina, Sicily at the age of 95.

Dr. Covello, known as "Pop," was described as "one of the greatest educators of New York City" by Nathan Glazer and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in their book **Beyond the Melting Pot**.

Born in Avigliano, Italy, he came to the U.S. at the age of nine and grew up in East Harlem. He was awarded a Pulitzer scholarship to attend Columbia University and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1911.

Dr. Covello began teaching in 1913 and was appointed first principal of the Benjamin Franklin High School when it opened in 1934. An originator of the "community school" concept, he fought for decentralization and community control over educational issues. While at B.F.H.S., Dr. Covello tried to develop a community centered education program for both students and parents designed to promote the well-being of the community and the expansion and preservation of a democratic society. "I believe," he once said, "there is a significant role to be played by our schools...(they) occupy not only an important strategic position, but also a unique position in the life of the community. It is the only social agency that has direct contact with practically every family in the community..."

He was ahead of his time. Recognizing the cultural heritage of regional dialects and folklore, he organized, in 1930, the Italian Choral Society to represent Italy at the Multinational Folk Festival Council in New York City. This program, the first of its kind, included traditional folk dances of various regions of Italy. The Choral Society is still in existence today under the name of "Il Coro d'Italia."

In addition to teaching, Dr. Covello was a lecturer at the N.Y.U. School of Education. His courses were: "The Social Background of the Italian Family in America" and "School-Community Education." Among his writings are **The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child: A Study of the Southern Italian Mores and Their Effect on the School Situation in Italy and America**, and his autobiography: **The Heart is the Teacher The Teacher in the Urban Community**.



Just off the press, the long-awaited, second and enlarged edition now available -

### FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY

(128 pages) includes illustrations, 171 dances with description and music, information about Italy, costumes, customs, etc. \$9.50.

An educational tape is available with music for the dance = \$5.00  
Add \$1.00 for first book and tape, add 50 cents for each additional book.

Please make checks or money orders to:

Elba F. Gurzau - 1325 West Roosevelt Blvd. Philadelphia, Pa. 19140 - (215) 324-1250.



He remained active in community affairs in East Harlem and the Leonard Covello Senior Center, at 302 E. 109th Street, was named in his honor. Soon after his retirement, he went to Italy where he worked as an educational counselor with Danilo Dolci, the Italian pacifist and social reformer. He also started the first prototype of a geriatric center in Ispica, Sicily. "I have dedicated my life to youth. I want to end my career with helping the aged," he said.

In one of his last Christmas messages he wrote, "I still have much to do. I shall then seek another planet where there are no wars, no military-industrial complexes, no human exploitation - in short, no barriers!"

We mourn his loss.

Luisa Le Pera

## In Brief. . . .

Book Reviews: **Covello, Leonard: The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child: A study of the Southern Italian Mores and their Effect on the School Situation in Italy and America**, edited and with an introduction by F. Cordasco, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1972. Reprint of 1967 edition.

A classic by "the creator of the community school concept." Valuable for history and the lessons it contains for those grappling with contemporary school problems encountered with minority groups.

**Covello, Leonard: The Heart is the Teacher: The Teacher in the Urban Community**; an autobiography, Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Co. Reprint of 1956 edition.

Folk Records Released from Archives: The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., has issued new editions of the first folk music recordings released from its Archive of Folk Songs. The five records were first issued on 78 rpm discs in 1942. Alan Lomax edited the series which set standards throughout the world for the dissemination of recorded indigenous music.

The records are available from the Recording Laboratory, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

"Dance and Human History": 16 mm., 40 minute, color and sound film by Alan Lomax and Forrestine Paulay. This renowned introduction to choreometrics illustrates two of the principal choreometric measures by which human movement can be compared cross-culturally: the spacial geometry of movement, that is, whether the limbs create trace forms in one, two or three dimensions; and the handling of the trunk - whether as a solid block in one unit or as two or more unit (shoulders, belly, pelvis...). The first scale is shown to be an index of a culture's economic productivity, the second to be related to climate and the sexual division of labor.

Cine Golden Eagle Award

Golden A Award (First Place), Modern Language Film Festival Certificate of Merit, Dance Films Award Competition.

Other films in the same series are Palm Play, and Step Style. Available for rent from University of California, Extension Media Center, Berkeley, California 94720.

# OUT OF DARKNESS

In Abruzzo

By Rose Grieco

Silence...and a sense of brooding melancholy pervade this ancient and isolated land – isolated because of the vast mountain ranges which encircle it.

As the power and beauty of Etna are felt throughout most of Eastern Sicily, so the majesty of the Gran Sasso, like a protective spirit, hovers above the towns and villages of the Abruzzi – towns and villages separated by the ever-rising mountains – many of which look perpetually down upon the clouds.

Proud and solemn are the people of Abruzzo, strengthened by their self-reliance, shrouded still by superstition, utilizing ancient cures, wise in ways of counter-magic.

**Listening to the songs that have come out of the Abruzzi, one begins to sense the soul of the people. The sombre moods of the ballads, telling of vanished childhood and unrequited love, in the most haunting of melodies reflects a people so instinctively artistic as to clothe life's darkest moments in song.**

A lonely shepherd on a distant hillside, sharing perpetual silence with his flock, (pipes slung casually over his shoulder against the time when loneliness becomes too heavy for bearing) in the stillness of a summer's day begins slowly, softly, to pour out his melancholy melodies on his primitive pipes, coloring the silence that enfolds the sweetened mountain air.

Surely he seems a descendent of Pan, except for the cross he wears about his neck and the amulet he carries against the powers of "maloccio." Surrounded by miles of yellow gorse that resemble quilts of gold as they stretch ever higher into the mountains, the shepherd is so perfectly attuned to Nature that he might have sprung from the mountains themselves rather than from mortal womb.

During the long, still nights in unbelievable isolation, the strange circle is formed with the shepherd lying in his sheepskin cape at the center – his flock surrounding him in ever-expanding circles...with finally the dogs on the outer fringes protecting both man and sheep from prowling wolves...an eerie reminder of the protective magic of the circle going back to the earliest of times. How often in this land one is turned back, (not always against his will) to the very beginning of things!

# LA FURLANA

Translated from "Notizie Storiche sui Balli Friulani," Bruno Rossi

by Rita Tonitto

The existence of the Furlana can be traced to 1574 when Henry III of France saw the dance while on a visit to "castello di Porcia." By 1600 it became extremely popular with the Venetians of both the upper and lower classes, overshadowing completely the then fashionable minuets, jigs and rondos. In its original form, the Furlana was a rustic but gracious dance; however, the Venetians danced it with less restraint and more vivacity, giving it a more sensual direction.

By 1700, although its popularity waned in Venice, this simple, charming dance was not lost to the people in the farther reaches of the region. It crossed the borders into neighboring countries and had a notable following in France in the "opera ballets" of Campra, La Barre, Rameau and in the musical compositions of Telemann, Couperin and Bach.

At the end of the 1800's and around the turn of the century, after a period of oblivion, the Furlana re-emerged to enjoy even greater popularity. Credit for this goes to Pius X

who favored the return of the "innocent" 16th Century Furlana to counteract the rising popularity of the new dance craze "il Tango," considered wanton and lewd. However, in Friuli there were no written records of the ancient Furlana – in fact, the Friulani were dancing "La Sclava" thinking it was the true Furlana.

After long dispute, the "new" Furlana was accepted – a dance in three-quarter time (not unlike "la Stajare"), a dance that maintained the rustic character of its original form, including the handkerchief game played by the dancers symbolizing the offering of a flower, skirmishes of jealousy or anger between the enamored couple, and the reconciliation at the finale of the dance sealed with a kiss on the forehead.

Diagramed formation and detailed steps, position, and music may be found in "Folk Dances, Costumes, and Customs of Italy" by Elba F. Gurzau. For more information see ad on page two.

**And when September comes and shepherds begin to leave the mountains, with solitary months ahead of leading their flocks down to the valleys by the sea...then, oh then, the peasants in the loneliest of regions bring in their crops and store their fuel against the time when they can no longer move freely about – when hovels are buried in everlasting snow, clouds and mist...and doors at night are locked and barred against ravenous, howling wolves.**

During the winter, a silence hangs over the mountain villages of Abruzzo...a silence so intense as to become almost alive, and in its "aliveness" produces rare treasures.

For what did they do in the endless winter nights that started shrouding the villages in darkness during the late afternoon, when there was no light in their simple homes except that which came from the fire and the glow from the one central brazier? What did they do on their isolated mountain-tops, far from the towns and the sights and sounds of living? How did they fill the hours of

their eternal winter nights in the mountains of Abruzzo?

THEY SANG.

Out of a common isolation and poverty – out of a common loneliness and longing for human sounds and human touch, they gathered together in one cold room, huddled in their great sheepskin capes around the brazier with the surrounding whitened mountains forever enclosing their world...and they sang.

Out of their deepest longings and profoundest emotions emerges a single phrase...in a simple melody...often repeated, as the new notes are found to give harmony and volume to the simple theme. Another phrase is added – an expanding of the melodic line – and soon the room is filled with warm and vibrant sound, banishing both cold and silence, sending loneliness in flight. Thus man conquers Nature's moods and fancies; human sorrows, human longings, coming forth in poetry and song, eternal proof of man's irrespressible spirit.

( Continued on Page 4 )

## TRADIZIONI WELCOMES NEW EDITOR

The editing and publishing of Tradizioni since its first issue in 1980, has been for us a great source of joy, satisfaction and pride.

We are now pleased to introduce Luisa LePera the editor in chief as of this issue. Luisa has assisted us in the past and is well qualified and enthusiastic about assuming the new and more demanding role.

A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College she majored in political and social science with minors in English and Italian.

—Editorial Staff—

The Italian Folk Art Federation of America, Inc. is a non-profit, educational federation. Its purpose is to research, preserve and foster interest in the various aspects of Italian folklore.

TRADIZIONI is published two times a year. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily endorsed by I.F.A.F.A. All correspondence should be addressed to: I.F.A.F.A., c/o N.S.C., 1300 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19140.

Subscription: Yearly 10.00  
Canada & Foreign (Payable in U.S. Dollars)  
Bulk Rate and back issues available

Letter from San Francisco: "Your Newsletter is excellent and I congratulate you. I just wish it were more frequent."  
Dr. Correa - Zoli

Editors' Note: We also wish it were published more often. We just don't have the money. Contributions are welcome.



### OUT OF DARKNESS

(Continued from Page 3)

Had they been city bred, the world would never have been thus enriched.

Oh mountain people of Abruzzo, I marvel at your rare endurance and innate artistry which turns life's darkness into light. What treasures Nature's harshness has wrought out of your agony and the dark and endless watches of your night.

Perhaps there had to be silence...before you could hear the songs that lay murmuring in your soul. Perhaps there had to be hardship before the cries from your heart could be freed.

(This article by Rose Grieco first appeared in Italian in "La Brigata," Naples, Italy.)



## ARTICLES NEEDED

Tradizioni is a "special interest newsletter" which focuses on various aspects of Italian Folklore.

**Needs:** original articles of general interest, historical, interviews, travel, humorous, brief news items, festivals, rituals, etc.

**Length:** Maximum 1500 words

**Terms:** We will be glad to publish any material approved by our editors free of any expense to you.

**Submissions:** send double spaced typewritten material to I.F.A.F.A. att: Editor in Chief

## CONFERENCE REVIEW

(Continued from Page 1)

Folk Dancing workshops with audience participation were held throughout Saturday and Sunday morning.

Leaders: Mae Fraley, Celeste De Pietropaulo, Elba Gurrzu, Giacomo Picciotto and Jeanette Sias.

The conference closed with the annual meeting of the Board.

## TRADIZIONI

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